

CAL POLY

M A G A Z I N E

A LIFE TRANSFORMED

MAURICE MCCLURE DISCOVERS HIMSELF AT CAL POLY

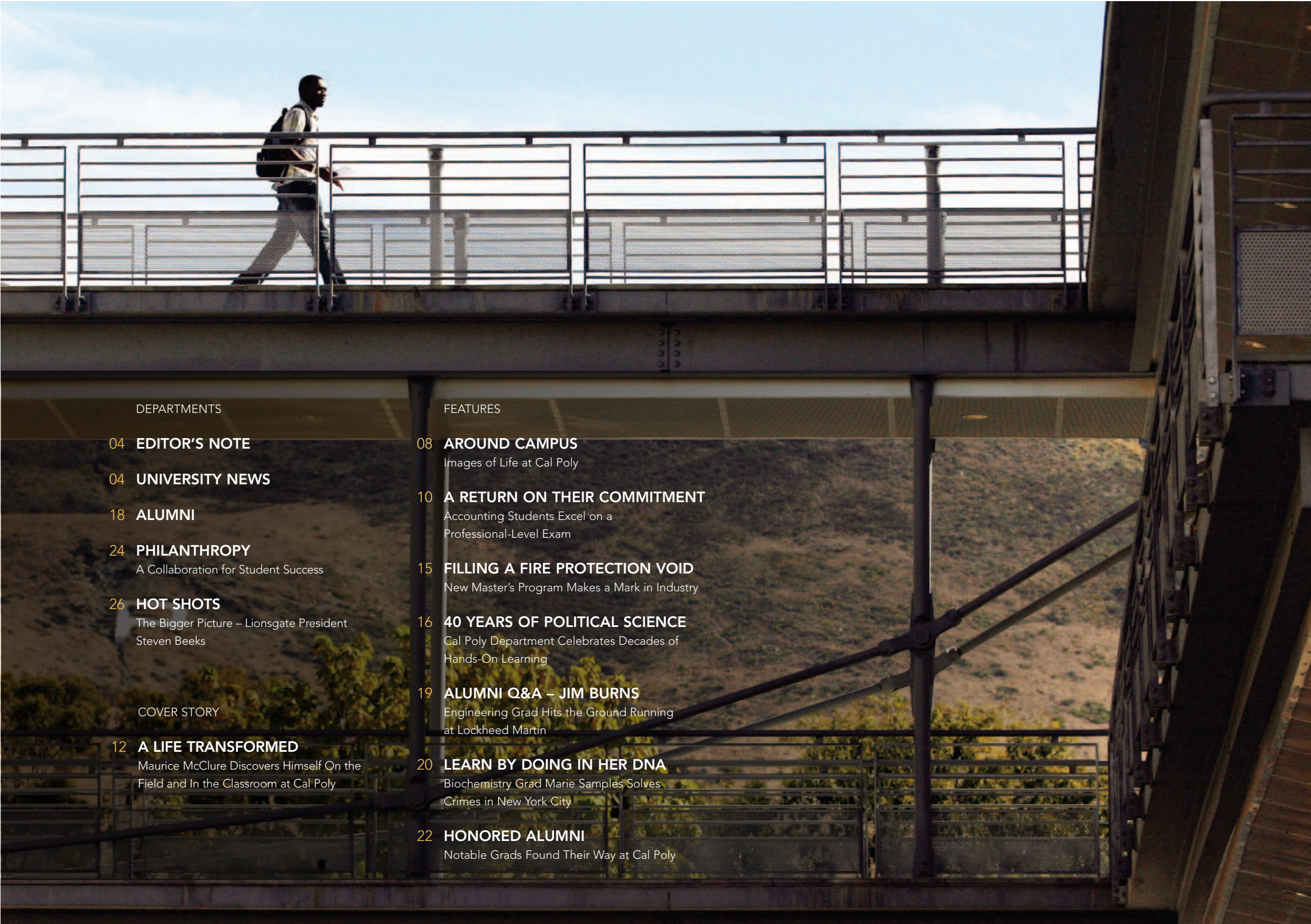
ALSO INSIDE >

- > **THE BIGGER PICTURE:** STEVEN BEEKS LEADS ENTERTAINMENT COMPANY LIONSGATE
- > **LEARN BY DOING IN HER DNA:** MARIE SAMPLES SOLVES CRIME IN NEW YORK CITY

| WINTER2011 |



CONTENTS



DEPARTMENTS

04 EDITOR'S NOTE

04 UNIVERSITY NEWS

18 ALUMNI

24 PHILANTHROPY

A Collaboration for Student Success

26 HOT SHOTS

The Bigger Picture – Lionsgate President
Steven Beeks

COVER STORY

12 A LIFE TRANSFORMED

Maurice McClure Discovers Himself On the
Field and In the Classroom at Cal Poly

FEATURES

08 AROUND CAMPUS

Images of Life at Cal Poly

10 A RETURN ON THEIR COMMITMENT

Accounting Students Excel on a
Professional-Level Exam

15 FILLING A FIRE PROTECTION VOID

New Master's Program Makes a Mark in Industry

16 40 YEARS OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

Cal Poly Department Celebrates Decades of
Hands-On Learning

19 ALUMNI Q&A – JIM BURNS

Engineering Grad Hits the Ground Running
at Lockheed Martin

20 LEARN BY DOING IN HER DNA

Biochemistry Grad Marie Samples Solves
Crimes in New York City

22 HONORED ALUMNI

Notable Grads Found Their Way at Cal Poly

CAL POLY

M A G A Z I N E

W I N T E R 2 0 1 1

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(On Cover) Cal Poly Mustangs football player and City and Regional Planning student Maurice McClure. (Photo by Joe Johnston)



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CAL POLY STUDENTS and alumni are never satisfied. They're compelled to reach for new heights of excellence, and they point to their Learn by Doing experiences at Cal Poly as the catalyst.

In this edition of Cal Poly Magazine, we share a few of their stories.

There's Steven Beeks, president of entertainment company Lionsgate, which produces hit such as "The Expendables," "Saw" and "Mad Men." There's Marie Samples, who deploys her Cal Poly science training to solve crimes in New York City. And there's Jim Burns, who works on cutting-edge spacecraft and missile defense programs at Lockheed Martin.

We know you'll be impressed by the students in Cal Poly's Chartered Financial Analyst Challenge program, who embark on a brutal yearlong course of study to take an exam most professionals take as 10-year veterans – and who far exceed the national passing rate.

And as further proof that Cal Poly transforms lives, we introduce Maurice McClure, a Mustangs offensive lineman and City and Regional Planning senior. "If it weren't for Cal Poly," he says, "I'd probably be at home right now, playing video games on the couch at my mom's."

The resident of a rough Bay Area neighborhood who grew up in a single-parent family after his father died young, McClure has flourished at Cal Poly. He's learned discipline through football, found camaraderie and developed a crucial sense of self-confidence.

Finally, please look for your name inside in our annual Honor Roll. We salute all who gave so generously this past year to help enrich Cal Poly's Learn by Doing programs.

Thanks for reading Cal Poly Magazine. I welcome your comments; please contact me at mlazier@calpoly.edu. □

— Matt Lazier, *Editor*
B.S., Journalism, 1997

PS: For additional content and multimedia features, visit Cal Poly Magazine online at www.magazine.calpoly.edu.

U.S. NEWS NAMES CAL POLY BEST IN THE WEST FOR 19TH YEAR

FOR THE 19TH STRAIGHT YEAR, Cal Poly has been rated the best public-master's university in the West in U.S. News & World Report's 2012 America's Best Colleges guidebook.

Cal Poly ranked seventh in the magazine's overall list of the West's best universities, including both public and private institutions that provide "a full range of undergraduate and master's-level programs but few, if any, doctoral programs." U.S. News ranks colleges that grant doctoral degrees, such as those in the University of California system, in a separate category. "We are pleased that U.S. News has again recognized Cal Poly as Best in the West," said Cal Poly President Jeffrey D. Armstrong. "We believe the dedication and commitment of our faculty and staff to our students along with our renowned Learn by Doing philosophy make this annual achievement possible. We couldn't be more proud."

Cal Poly's College of Engineering program was again named second best public master's engineering program in the country, just behind the U.S. Military Academy. □

KATHLEEN ENZ FINKEN NAMED CAL POLY'S NEW PROVOST



KATHLEEN ENZ FINKEN has been named Cal Poly's new provost, making her the university's top administrator for academic affairs and the senior member of the president's executive management staff. Enz Finken, currently provost and vice chancellor for academic affairs at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, brings broad academic and administrative experience in public higher education to her new role. She will begin work in early February.

"Kathleen brings a wealth of experience to Cal Poly as a professor, college dean and provost," said Cal Poly President Jeffrey D. Armstrong. "She knows what works for students and understands their perspective as well as the perspectives of both faculty members and administrators. Kathleen's approach to problem solving will work well at Cal Poly. She is calm, thoughtful and collaborative but also persistent and focused on doing what is best for students' success. □



Crews place the last beam during steel construction on the new Center for Science and Mathematics.

A CONSTRUCTION MILESTONE FOR CENTER FOR SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS

THE CENTER FOR SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS reached a milestone Sept. 15: placement of the final steel beam completing the framing structure of the six-story building. Gilbane Building Company held a private "Topping Out" ceremony for 200 subcontractors who have brought the project to this point. Also invited were about 100 Cal Poly physics, chemistry and soil science professors who will hold classes in the building.

THE \$132 MILLION, 197,000-SQUARE-FOOT BUILDING WAS MADE POSSIBLE BY VOTER-APPROVED STATE EDUCATION CONSTRUCTION BONDS AND \$20 MILLION IN PRIVATE DONATIONS TO CAL POLY.

Cal Poly President Jeffrey D. Armstrong and Phil Bailey, dean of the College of Science and Mathematics, spoke to the crowd about how much the center means to the university. Christopher Giese, a Cal Poly alum and Gilbane Building Company Project executive, also spoke.

The \$132 million, 197,000-square-foot building was made possible by voter-approved state education construction bonds and \$20 million in private donations to Cal Poly. The center is set to open in spring 2013. □

CAL POLY MAKES FORBES BEST COLLEGES LIST FOR FOURTH STRAIGHT YEAR

FOR THE FOURTH YEAR IN A ROW, Cal Poly ranks on the Forbes magazine list of the countrys best colleges and universities. Cal Poly ranks No. 9 among Californias public universities and, just as last year, is the top-ranked California State University campus on the list. Cal Poly appears at No. 28 among the 50 private and public California universities and at No. 230 overall among the 650 U.S. campuses on the list. It is the fourth year Forbes has produced the list, with Cal Poly appearing each year. □

DEBORAH READ NAMED CAL POLY'S NEW VICE PRESIDENT FOR UNIVERSITY ADVANCEMENT

DEBORAH READ, who brings nearly three decades of experience in higher education fundraising, has been named Cal Poly's new vice president for university advancement and CEO of the Cal Poly Foundation. Read currently serves as vice president for university advancement at the University of Dayton in Ohio.

In announcing the appointment, Cal Poly President Jeffrey D. Armstrong cited her breadth and depth as a career fundraiser and administrator. "Deborah has compiled a stellar career of achievement as a fundraiser and strategic planner of major capital campaigns on scales larger than Cal Poly has yet to undertake," Armstrong said. "In Deborah Read, I am confident that we are adding a proven leader with deep experience at a time when Cal Poly absolutely must develop more philanthropic support for our Learn by Doing programs." Read's appointment is effective Jan. 1. □

CAL POLY ENGINEERING SWEEPS AIAA STUDENT AIRCRAFT DESIGN COMPETITION

CAL POLY ENGINEERING swept first-, second- and third-place awards in the undergraduate and graduate student design competition sponsored by the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA).

In the undergraduate contest, teams were required to design an innovative heavy-lift hybrid air vehicle. The top prize went to Cal Poly's Mustang Aerospace team. The graduate student competition called for an electrically powered aircraft. Cal Poly's VoltAir team took top honors with The BLITZ Electric Aircraft. The teams were under the direction of faculty advisor Bruce Wright, joined by William Durgin for the graduate competition. "The fact that five of us were able to design nearly every aspect of a radically new airplane in a matter of months was the most impressive part of the whole competition," said Matt Handfelt, team lead for The BLITZ. "It tested our Learn by Doing mettle to the extreme. The intensity of challenges and deadlines required learning and doing almost simultaneously – and it showed us how far we could go."

The AIAA is the world's largest technical society dedicated to the global aerospace profession. □

DEBRA LARSON IS THE NEW DEAN OF CAL POLY ENGINEERING

DEBRA LARSON IS THE NEW DEAN of Cal Poly Engineering. Most recently a civil engineering professor and Academic Affairs administrator with Northern Arizona University, Larson assumed her new role at Cal Poly in late summer.

"Debra understands Cal Poly thoroughly and brings an excellent blend of experience as an administrator and faculty member," Cal Poly President Jeffrey D. Armstrong said. "She knows that our primary mission is undergraduate education, that our highest priority is student success, and that Learn by Doing is an integral part of the Cal Poly experience."

Armstrong added that Larson's colleagues consistently praised her focus on student learning, her high energy and her uncanny ability to build consensus among peers. "Cal Poly has one of the nation's most respected engineering programs, yet everyone in the College of Engineering believes we can be even better, and Debra is the right person to help us enrich our program," Armstrong said. □

KINESIOLOGY PROFESSOR AWARDED \$3 MILLION GRANT TO AID LOW-INCOME MOTHERS

A CAL POLY PROFESSOR HAS RECEIVED a \$3 million National Institutes of Health grant to develop new ways to help low-income mothers return to their pre-pregnancy weight within a year.

Kinesiology Professor Suzanne Phelan of Cal Poly's STRIDE center (Science through Translational Research in Diet and Exercise) will work with mothers in San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara counties.

"High postpartum weight retention occurs in approximately 25 percent of young adult women. It's a significant predictor of long-term weight gain, obesity, and obesity-related health problems," Phelan said.

Phelan, STRIDE researchers and Cal Poly students will offer an online weight-loss program to a target group of 410 new mothers. It will be the first in the nation to document and evaluate the effects of an Internet-based postpartum weight loss program in low-income women. □

CAL POLY'S MUSTANG DAILY STUDENT NEWSPAPER CONVERTS TO BROADSHEET

CAL POLY'S MUSTANG DAILY, the only daily university newspaper in the nation fully produced by students on campus, has converted from tabloid to broadsheet format.

The newspaper has been published on campus for more than 90 years. It is the go-to newspaper when students want to know what is happening on campus and in the community. The Mustang Daily also provides a direct way for local businesses to reach an audience that annually spends more than \$172 million dollars.

"One of the reasons we changed from tabloid to broadsheet is to allow our student editors to work on a similar platform to what they will find in the newspaper industry," said Paul Bit-tick, general manager of the Mustang Daily. "Advertisers are also pleased with the new format and improved color quality." □

A student displays a copy of the new broadsheet Mustang Daily.



AROUNDCAMPUS

IMAGES FROM CAL POLY FROM FALL QUARTER 2011

PHOTOS BY AARON LAMBERT



A student walks in shadow through the Architecture building.

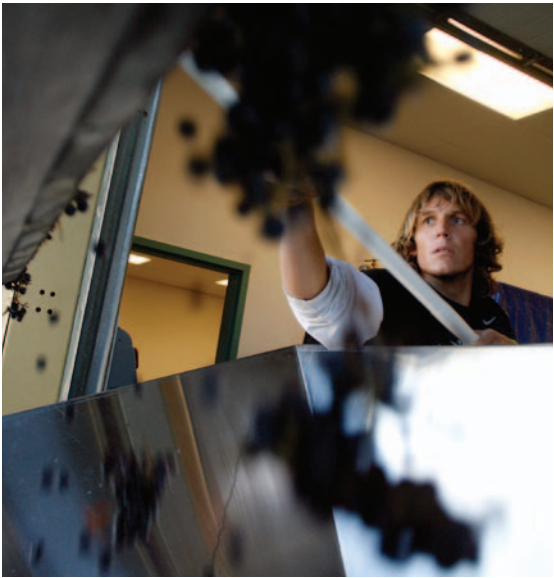


< Rain dampens University Union Plaza



Fourth-year Biology students Tyler Smith, (left) and Dean Preedeedilok, study a bat in biology class.

Students Casey Smith (Computer Science), left, Karin Forsell (Business), center, and Jennifer Kiesewetter (Recreation, Parks and Tourism Administration) head off to pay for their pumpkins at the Cal Poly Pumpkin Patch just before Halloween.



Wine and Viticulture student Patrick Sigler pulls wine grapes out of a container and onto a belt headed towards the destemmer at Cal Poly's Pilot Winery facility.



FINANCE STUDENTS STUDY HARD TO PASS
PROFESSION-LEVEL CFA EXAM

BY MARY MCNALLY

IT'S MORE THAN JUST BOOT CAMP for finance majors – more like Navy SEAL training for future captains of industry. The Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) designation is the recognized gold standard in financial management. Becoming certified, requires passing three rigorous levels of testing and working in a professional capacity for at least four years. Most people who attempt the first level have been working in the industry for 10 years or more. In the Orfalea College of Business, the yearlong CFA Challenge senior project prepares 15 students to take the first-level exam each year. Each level covers more than 2,700 pages on principles and applications in finance, quantitative methodology (valuation), ethics, economics and accounting. Fewer than 1 percent of people taking the six-hour tests are in college. Of all those who attempt the first level, only 39 percent pass. Cal Poly students achieved a 60 percent pass rate in 2011. It's an indication of how well-equipped Cal Poly finance students are to perform in the real world. "All kinds of people are calling to hire students with this kind of training. It's like being on the job," said Finance Area Chair Cyrus Ramezani, who launched the program four years ago. Students have to apply to the program. Class is held for



A RETURN ON THEIR COMMITMENT

CFA Challenge students hard at work on a practice test



six hours every Friday, with a practice test every other week. Dylan Gale (B.S., Business Administration, 2010) landed a job as a securities analyst at Wells Fargo. After the market collapse the prior year, "it was one of the most difficult hiring environments in the last 20 years," Gale said. He attributes his success to the knowledge he gained through the CFA Challenge. The rewards, he says, are worth the sacrifice. "I'm working on one of the most exciting deals of the year," he said: the initial public offering for online coupon retailer Groupon. "Not many people straight out of school get to work on deals you'd be read-

ing about on the front page of **The Wall Street Journal**." The rewards are also tangible, Ramezani said; those who hold the CFA designation make an average of \$250,000 per year.

OF ALL THOSE WHO ATTEMPT THE FIRST LEVEL, ONLY 39 PERCENT PASS. CAL POLY STUDENTS ACHIEVED A 60 PERCENT PASS RATE IN 2011.

Blain Soohoo (B.S. Business Administration, 2011) is a consultant with Factset, a company that specializes in customized software for investment professionals. He said taking the

level-one test helped him feel comfortable talking with portfolio managers and institutional investors who manage hundreds of millions of dollars.

"Cal Poly is all about practical application," Soohoo said. "The CFA Challenge helped me get farther than a lot of professionals who have been in the industry for a while. □



TRAGEDY AT HOME; TRANSFORMATION AT CAL POLY

MAURICE MCCLURE DISCOVERS HIMSELF ON THE FIELD AND IN CLASS

BY STACIA MOMBURG

PHOTOS BY LAURA DICKINSON, JOE JOHNSTON AND STACIA MOMBURG

MAURICE MCCLURE SAYS THAT IF it weren't for Cal Poly, he'd be sitting on the couch playing video games at his mom's house in San Francisco.

Instead, the 23-year-old City and Regional Planning major and Mustang offensive lineman will graduate in the spring and look forward to living a life he never thought possible.

"I didn't think I was smart enough to go to college. My sister, Talia, got a full scholarship to UC Berkeley. As far as I was concerned, there was no way I was going to have that experience," McClure said. "My mother used to apologize to me, telling me she couldn't be able to afford to send me to college."

Happily, his mother's concerns were premature. There would be college for McClure, but not before he and his family endured tragedy, and not before a number of educators – including a high school administrator and a favorite Cal

Poly professor nicknamed "Brother Wack" – stepped in to provide support and opportunities that McClure eagerly seized.

McClure's journey to Cal Poly began when he was 8. His father coached youth football in San Francisco. To impress his dad, McClure decided to play.

"I had to play up a level, because I was so big," he said. "My dad and I would go on diets together, so I'd make weight for the division I played in."

McClure's father, a coach for 11 years, put his son through his paces. "I played tackle. It taught me how to be tough. It was hard. Everyone was older and they hit really hard, but I learned to tough it out."

McClure played on his father's teams for three years. He worked hard and learned how to play both offense and defense.

LOSS

When McClure was 11, tragedy struck. His father, James "Butch" McClure, had been sick with what the family thought was a bad flu virus. McClure remembers being home with his father when his dad fell violently ill and was rushed to the hospital.

"I didn't see him again after that," he said. "He had a massive heart attack brought on by advanced-stage leukemia. We had no idea."

Maurice McClure, his mother Dori and his four siblings were left behind. McClure's older brother and sister had already moved out of the family's home in San Francisco's Lakeview District. "It was me, my mom, my brother Marcus and my sister Mia," McClure said.

And McClure's football came to a dead stop: "After my dad died, I was burned out and just didn't want to play."

He played basketball at St. Emydius Junior High, though, and maintained a 3.0 GPA. That's where a school administrator saw McClure's potential and nominated him for the Achieve Program – a year-round, four-year high school scholarship and enrichment program for underserved students from low-income families.

The program selects young men and women who "are strongly motivated to put forth maximum effort to change and improve their lives," according to its mission.

Through the program, McClure attended Archbishop Rioridan High School, an all-boys Catholic school in Lakeview. He also returned to the gridiron.

I DIDN'T HAVE FAITH IN HOW SMART I WAS, AND IT'S BEEN GREAT TO LEARN THAT IF I REALLY LIKE SOMETHING, I CAN BE REALLY GOOD AT IT.

"It was time; I just wanted to play again. I played guard and tackle my freshman year."

He also wanted to keep playing basketball. And since he had to maintain a 3.0 GPA to play two sports, he was academically motivated.

The Achieve Program exposed him to cultural events and activities he might not otherwise have experienced, McClure said. "I also got to play in the West Catholic League for football, which is much more competitive than the public school leagues in Lakeview."



EFFORT AND TEAMWORK

In his senior year, the school hired a new football coaching staff who would help McClure grow to be a better player, and that was the trail that eventually led to Cal Poly.

"I was lazy," McClure said. "Mike Langridge pushed me hard. He inspired me to be better and taught me to push through being tired on field."

In exchange for that 100 percent on-field effort, Langridge promised he would work hard to get McClure a scholarship.

When San Jose State passed on McClure because of a broken ankle and a previous rotator cuff injury, Langridge contacted former Cal Poly football coach Rich Ellison, who offered McClure a full scholarship and red-shirted the 6-foot-2-inch, 305-pound freshman.

"Being red-shirted gave me an opportunity to hone my skills and lose 40 pounds," said McClure, who is now down to 280 pounds.

Current Cal Poly football Coach Tim Walsh said McClure could have been selected All-America if not for a series of injuries. He also said McClure's "do-what-is-best-for-the-team attitude" has earned his teammates' respect.

"He's a quiet, humble young man who puts his mom and family first, his education second, and his football successes third," Walsh said. "He works hard to be the best at all he does. I have no doubt he will be successful wherever he goes in life."

LEARNING CONFIDENCE

McClure said it was only when he arrived at Cal Poly that he began to understand he really was smart enough to go to college. "I didn't have faith in how smart I was, and it's been great to learn that if I really like something, I can be really good at it."



He admits he was distracted when he first arrived at Cal Poly. At an all-boys school, McClure noted, girls weren't a daily diversion. He said he also lacked good time-management skills when he arrived.

Eventually the distractions caught up with him, and he realized he needed to focus.

"I used to be a huge procrastinator. Now I work hard to get my work out of the way so I can enjoy the fun stuff that much more," he said. "The day I chose studying over Xbox was the day I realized I was a real student."

Now in his fifth year, McClure is fascinated with urban transportation systems. "After taking a few classes, I remember going home to San Francisco and being able to truly under-

PROFESSORS IN MY DEPARTMENT
GO OUT OF THEIR WAY TO HELP
STUDENTS SUCCEED – WHETHER YOU
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WANT US TO SUCCEED SO THAT WE
CAN HELP OTHERS SUCCEED.

stand how and why the city's roads and transportation systems work," he said.

He also enjoys urban planning and development. "I wouldn't mind working for a nonprofit that builds low-income housing that doesn't look like low-income housing – places where people want to live and take pride in their homes," he said.

McClure attributes much of his success to the dedication of the City and Regional Planning faculty.

"Professors in my department go out of their way to help students succeed – whether you take their classes or not. They want us to succeed so that we can help others succeed," he said.

THE DAY I CHOSE STUDYING OVER
XBOX WAS THE DAY I REALIZED
I WAS A REAL STUDENT.

He is particularly fond of "Brother Wack" – Professor Paul Wack in the CRP Department. "He helped me out a lot," McClure said "When I first got here, I found the tests really hard. Brother Wack would talk me through the material; he would take the time to help me understand it. We just clicked."

BROTHERHOOD

McClure also has found support in two very close friends – his roommates and fellow football team members Jarred Houston and Darryl Williams. "I came here by myself, but I will leave here with two brothers – my family," McClure said.

"Darryl goes out of his way to make me laugh and always tells me the truth – no matter how harsh – because he doesn't want to see me mess up. Jared has my back no matter what and would follow a friend to the end of Earth. The support they give me drives me to make good decisions and be responsible for my actions daily.

The three travel in a pack, are avid movie watchers, and love hip-hop and R&B music.

And both Darryl and Jarred agree that when it comes to McClure, "He's a big teddy bear, everybody loves Maurice," they said.

McClure looks forward to graduation in June and then a wide-open future.

"I want to keep training and maybe try out for the Canadian Football League," he said. "I want to go home, but I also want to travel to Spain or Italy. Maybe I'll land a job."

Wherever he goes, he'll carry his Cal Poly experience with him.

"The people here are so nice. It's a relaxing place to be. So much is so good about Cal Poly." □



Cambria firefighters work with students in Cal Poly's Fire Protection Engineering Program.

FILLING A FIRE PROTECTION VOID

NEW CAL POLY MASTER'S PROGRAM MAKES
AN IMMEDIATE MARK IN INDUSTRY

BY MATT LAZIER

he saw the potential for increased professional opportunities with an FPE master's. Now in his second year, Phillips is interviewing for a job as a fire protection engineer.

"There's definitely a need," he said. "I just did an interview with one large design/build firm; they only have one FPE on the West Coast."

Students say they'll be well-prepared to enter the workforce because of the program's hands-on focus, including a culminating project that involves examining an existing building for code compliance and running simulation models to determine how the building would react to a fire.

"It really builds on our existing engineering toolbox," said second-year student Will Fletcher. "It's exciting to know I have these abilities and that I know how to apply them in the field."

Enrollment is growing. There are double the number of students this year (about 40) over last. About a quarter of those are on the Cal Poly campus, with the rest involved through distance-learning from around the country

Mowrer and his students said they hope to increase interest and expand the program's multidisciplinary reach.

One important step in that direction happened earlier this year, when the program secured a nearly \$1 million federal grant to coordinate a research project testing the effectiveness of compressed air foam systems in suppressing structural fires and examining whether the systems are safe for firefighters.

Cal Poly students and faculty from several disciplines (including Construction Management, Natural Resources Management and Mechanical Engineering) will work with fire departments, industry officials and researchers from California and Maryland on the study. □

For more information about the FPE program, visit:
<http://fpe.calpoly.edu/>.

CAL POLY'S
POLITICAL SCIENCE
DEPARTMENT
TURNS 40
BY JO ANN LLOYD

ONE DOORWAY
MANY PATHS

FOR 40 YEARS, Cal Poly's Political Science Department has molded leaders as diverse as its slate of courses – which range from Chinese Politics and Ancient and Medieval Political Thought to World Food Systems and the California Constitution and Government.

Because Political Science majors develop a broad understanding of political concepts, institutions, behaviors and processes, they can step into a variety of jobs. Department alumni include lawyers, elected and appointed officials, lobbyists, union and business leaders, teachers and administrators.

"The sky is virtually the limit for Political Science graduates," said Department Head Craig Arceneaux. Students can choose concentrations in global politics, American politics and pre-law, or they can design their own individualized course of study.

Here are the stories of the varying paths three alumni have taken.

THE LOBBYIST

ANALYZING & IMPLEMENTING LAWS



Danielle Walters has her hands full implementing the Obama Administration's healthcare reform in all 50 states for Sanofi-Aventis, the global healthcare company where she is an associate vice president of government healthcare programs.

"I examine changes in health regulatory policy and prepare my company for those changes," said Walters (**B.A., Political Science, 1987**). Her focus is making sure Sanofi complies with the new laws. "Then I figure out the best ways to deliver our products, understand how the law will change the marketplace, and help our business adapt."

It is also her job to communicate, analyze and lobby on those issues to see how they are being implemented. She works with Sanofi's legal teams, lobbyists and all parts of the business operation so they know what's coming and how to adapt.

Cal Poly prepared her well, she said. "The culture fostered and encouraged critical thinking, engagement and personal involvement. The small classes allowed for one-on-one discussion. From my freshman year, I was debating and discussing issues – with a full professor."

She learned to critically look at information, intellectualize it and communicate it. "I learned good communication skills, how to make and support my argument. That is huge in the environment I am in."

THE LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

BEHIND THE LAWS



AS A JUNIOR, Michael Madriaga (**B.A., Political Science, 2008**) fell in love with political science in Professor Bud Evans' World Food Systems class. "Before that, I was going to go into city and regional planning," he recalled.

He still loves politics, and he's got a front row seat at the California State Assembly as legislative director for Assemblyman Katcho Achadjian, whose 33rd district covers the Central Coast from Santa Maria to San Simeon.

"I analyze policy coming before the Legislature for a vote," Madriaga explained. "I make recommendations based on infor-

mation and dialogue with appropriate district stakeholders."

He got his first taste of politics as an intern in the private office of then-Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, and then landed a job as district representative with then-Assemblyman Sam Blakeslee.

"I'm indebted to Cal Poly," he said. "It comes down to curricular diversity. The breadth of issues covered prepared me well for work in the Legislature, which deals with a variety of statewide issues."

"Cal Poly challenged me to think outside the box, to think critically and strategically. We were encouraged to be persuasive in our writing. That is a key facet in my job working with lobbyists and community stakeholders."

THE CONGRESSMAN

MAKING LAWS

U.S. Representative Jeff Denham (**B.A., Political Science, 1992**) splits his time between his Merced County almond farm and the halls of Congress in Washington, D.C.



Denham is serving his first term in Congress, representing California's 19th District, covering parts of Fresno, Madera, Mariposa, Tuolumne and Stanislaus counties.

His interest in politics was sparked when, as an almond farmer, he found himself growing frustrated with the laws and regulations blocking growth in the agriculture industry. When a local assembly seat opened up, "no one was running, and some friends suggested I run. I believe strongly in serving my community, so I ran. But I didn't win."

He later won two terms in the State Senate, though, serving from 2002 to 2010 before being elected to Congress.

Denham enrolled at Cal Poly after serving in the U.S. Air Force. While still an undergraduate, he was called back to fight in Operation Desert Storm.

He credits Cal Poly for "grounding" him. "Political science opened up new doors and gave me a worldwide perspective. My senior project was on Desert Storm and the Middle East. Two decades later, as a congressman, I am still looking at the same things." □

THE POLITICAL SCIENCE DEPARTMENT will celebrate its 40th anniversary with several initiatives and activities, beginning with an awards ceremony and banquet at the department's Alumni Advisory Board meeting May 18. Additional events will follow through 2012-13. More information will be available on the department website at <http://cla.calpoly.edu/pols.html>. Or contact the department at 805-756-2984.)

ALUMNI IN THE NEWS



A.J. Forsythe

> **ALL-STAR STUDENT ENTREPRENEUR CREATES iCRACKED**
A.J. Forsythe (B.S., **Psychology**, 2011) decided after having his iPhone broken twice in a week he needed an alternative to Apple's costly cell phone repair service. From that experience, a business idea was born: Forsythe decided to fix his iPhone himself and turned it into the repair service, iCracked, a company with a projected \$200,000 annual revenue. Forsythe and his company recently received feature treatment in Forbes magazine.

> **GRAD ACQUIRES REAL ESTATE SERVICES FIRM**
Robert Talbott (B.S., **Agricultural Business**, 1985) partnered with Scott Mencacay to acquire RW Zukin Corporation, a Bay Area real estate services firm, according to dBusinessNews.com. Talbott will work as RW Zukin's new CEO. Prior to the acquisition of RW Zukin, Talbott, in partnership with Thompson | Dorfman Partners, LLC, acquired and redeveloped two apartment communities.

> **ALUM APPOINTED PRESIDENT OF SOCIAL TARGETING COMPANY**
Matt Arkin (B.S., **Business Administration**, 1992) was appointed president of 33Across, a nationwide social targeting platform, MarketWatch.com reported. Arkin will oversee all revenue and operations and help guide the strategic growth of the business. He brings more than 18 years of online media sales and operations experience to 33Across.

> **LEARNING TABLE MANNERS BECOMES A GAME**
Staci Ericson (B.S., **Nutritional Science**, 1989) created the card game Golly Gee-pers Table Manners after looking for a friendly and respectful way to teach table manners to her daughter, the New Times in San Luis Obispo reported. The game is a set of 14 illustrated cards depicting good and bad table manners with either a thumbs-up or thumbs-down. Ericson's invention was recently named one of the 10 Best Socially Responsible Products for Children by Stevanne Auerbach and placed among the Top 100 Best New Children's Products for Children.

> **GRAD NAMED NAPA COUNTY TEACHER OF THE YEAR**
Jennifer Castelazo (B.S., **Microbiology**, 1989, B.S., **Agriculture**, 1996, CRD, **Credential-Physics**, 1999) was recently named the Napa County Teacher of the Year, according to the Oakland Tribune. Castelazo teaches chemistry and AP chemistry at Vintage High School in Napa.

> **GRAD JOINS CONSTRUCTION COMPANY AS MANAGER**
Charlie Poggemann (B.S., **Construction Management**, 1994) has joined Kirtley-Cole Associates LLC in Everett, Wash., as a senior project manager, according to the Shohomish County Business Journal. Poggemann has 20 years of construction industry experience.

> **COMPUTER SCIENCE GRAD CREATES THE "ULTIMATE PHONE ACCESSORY"**
Ted Larson (B.S., **Computer Science**, 1991, M.S., **Computer Science**, 1992) has created what he calls "the ultimate phone accessory" – AMP (Automated Music Personality), a two-wheeled, self-balancing, musical robot powered by a smartphone or MP3 player. AMP, which was recently featured in VentureBeat will follow a person around and play their favorite music. Larson is the co-founder of OLogic, an embedded systems research and development company with a focus on robotics. □

Alumnus Ted Larson's
AMP (Automated
Music Personality)



ENGINEERING GRAD JIM BURNS HIT THE GROUND RUNNING WITH LOCKHEED MARTIN

BY CATHY ENNS

WHAT DOES IT MEAN for a Cal Poly grad to be ready to hit the ground running as graduation approaches? For Jim Burns (B.S., **Electrical Engineering**, 2006), it meant a resume in Lockheed Martin's "high potential" stack, seven interviews and three job offers at the company's Space Systems business unit in Sunnyvale, Calif.

Now a senior systems engineer with the defense contractor, Burns recalls that he felt "lab-ready, tested and tried" when Lockheed Martin hired him upon graduation.

Cal Poly offered various career developing opportunities, and Burns was quick to take advantage. He started with career fairs—creating a resume and attending one of the events in his sophomore year.

As a junior, Burns used the Career Services website extensively, mining it for resume tips and cover letter strategies and signing up for on-campus interviews. Those moves helped him land an internship in Southern California at Alcon Laboratories, a biomedical company specializing in eye care products.

He spent six months at Alcon's Irvine Technology Center, researching and characterizing lasers to be used in a future eye surgical device. The following summer, he returned for a second stint at Alcon, designing the LCD control panel circuit board for the same surgical device.

Burns credits the many engineering Learn by Doing opportunities Cal Poly offered for his workforce-readiness. One of these opportunities was PolySat, a student-led project that builds and launches cube-sized satellites into space to perform research and explore new technologies for various sponsors—one of which is Lockheed Martin.

The College of Engineering supports students in many ways, Burns said. The fact that open lab hours are available on weekends, for example, is a major advantage that gives students freedom complete lab assignments, work on senior projects or follow their own interests. And the proliferation of lab courses provides important hands-on opportunities.

"Nearly every engineering class has a one-unit lab along with it," he said. "In those labs, students work with the same technology they'll be using on the job. That's one reason that, pound for pound, Cal Poly engineering units outweigh those of other universities."

Lockheed Martin Space Systems Company has a similar view, regarding Cal Poly as one of their "key schools" and singling out the university for a top-level partnership. The company assists the College of Engineering with curriculum development and funding support. Not surprisingly, Cal Poly grads are one of the largest alumni groups on the Sunnyvale campus and, like Burns, many are now involved in Cal Poly recruiting efforts.

Now in his sixth year at Lockheed Martin, Burns continues to build his portfolio of experience in true Learn by Doing style. He has worked on a variety of spacecraft and missile defense programs and performed various functions. His roles have included hardware design, systems integration, project management and problem resolution.

What will Burns tackle next? Even though he hastened to say "there's no guarantee," he did note that he was selected for—and recently completed—a three-year Engineering Leadership Development Program at Lockheed Martin. Next stop: management? □

LAB-READY, TESTED AND TRIED

ALUMNI

ALUMNI

A woman with long brown hair, wearing a white lab coat and purple gloves, is using a pipette in a laboratory setting. The background is slightly blurred, showing lab equipment and shelves.

MARIE SAMPLES HELPS MANAGE THE NATION'S LARGEST PUBLIC FORENSIC CRIME LAB

LEARN BY DOING IN HER

BY TERESA M IANI HENDRIX

NEW YORK CITY IS A TOUGH PLACE to tackle crime, but Marie Samples uses science and her Cal Poly degree to do it every day in her job at the nation's largest public forensic crime lab.

Samples (**B.S., Biochemistry, 1982**) is an assistant director at the Department of Forensic Biology in the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner in New York City. Her department analyzes biological and chemical data increasingly essential to criminal investigations.

She earned a master's in chemistry from UC Santa Cruz in 1984 and another in biochemistry from City University of New York in 1999. She started her post-college career in the California Department of Justice crime lab in the 1980s and then went to work as a supervisor and then manager for New York City's OCME.

Now, she supervises a group of criminalists who analyze evidence from homicides, sexual assaults and other serious crimes, and she oversees the lab's DNA databases.

"I manage a group of very dedicated analysts who work on some of the most serious crimes in the city," she said. "I spend a lot of time reviewing DNA data and reports for accuracy and completeness, and I also help guide newer analysts as they develop their skills. Mostly, I stay out of the way and let them do what they do best."

Her office has two missions. It is responsible for all the scientific analysis required by cases going through the city's criminal justice system, and it serves as the "support lab" helping medical examiners determine the cause of death in suspicious cases (including possible homicides, suicides and other deaths where there was no attending physician).

The job provides her with an array of fascinating and sometimes bizarre cases. Among the office's most significant efforts: the unprecedented task of identifying the remains of the nearly 3,000 victims of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

Through it all, Samples remains grounded in the hands-on education she received at Cal Poly.

Q: WHY DID YOU WANT TO BE A FORENSIC SCIENTIST?

A: After I got my master's from UC Santa Cruz, I saw a job posting from the California Department of Justice crime lab. I interviewed and got the job, and it became a career. It was accidental – though my mother said she saw it coming, because I read every Agatha Christie book as a kid.

Q: WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE PART OF BEING A FORENSIC SCIENTIST IN A CRIME LAB?

A: There is a great variety of case scenarios and evidence items. Though every day may be the same in terms of the tasks, the specifics of the cases change. That keeps it interesting.

Q: WHAT'S THE MOST DIFFICULT PART?

A: Some people find that dealing with crime every day gets

them down; others find that the specter of testifying in court is hard. In this city, the pace and volume of cases puts a lot of pressure on us; that can also be very difficult.

Q: WHAT WAS THE MOST DIFFICULT CASE YOU'VE WORKED ON?

A: Some of the earliest DNA cases were the most difficult. We were just starting out, the technology was new to the court system, and everyone – scientists, police, attorneys – was struggling to learn. The cases may not have been particularly hard, but the overall process was.

Q: HAVE YOU HANDLED ANY FAMOUS OR NOTORIOUS CASES?

A: Yes, the case of Kerry Kotler, one of the earliest people exonerated by DNA testing. He drew a lot of attention to the potential uses of DNA technology in reviewing "settled" criminal cases. (Editor's note: Kotler, a Long Island fisherman, was convicted of raping a woman in 1981. He was released from prison in 1992 after DNA tests on the evidence cleared him. He sued the state of New York for wrongful imprisonment and was awarded \$1.5 million.)

When Mr. Kotler was arrested again in 1995 and charged in the rape of a 20-year-old college student, I was asked to independently re-test the evidence in the case, given his history. It was in the news for quite a while. I ended up testifying at his trial in 1997; he was found guilty.

Q: HOW DID YOUR CAL POLY DEGREE HELP PREPARE YOU FOR YOUR CAREER?

A: Forensics is a great field to apply the Learn by Doing philosophy. Almost every course I took had value. Polymer chemistry? Good information for the analysis of fibers. Organic chemistry? Need it all to analyze drug samples and handle clandestine drug labs. Both the theory and the practical use of the gas chromatograph-mass spectrometer and Fourier-transform infrared spectrophotometer) were important. And DNA analysis? The entire year of biochemistry is foundational knowledge. Even some of those pesky biology courses ended up being useful. My senior project, which involved measuring damage to DNA molecules, ingrained in me less tangible knowledge and skills: the scientific method, the ability to troubleshoot, and perseverance. Requiring such a capstone experience is valuable to every Cal Poly graduate.

Q: WHAT DOES 'LEARN BY DOING' MEAN TO YOU?

A: It is the most immersive way of learning. I had high school friends who went to big-name colleges. They went on to take large lecture courses taught by grad students, with little opportunity for any hands-on learning. I am lucky to have gone to Cal Poly. □

FOR HONORED ALUMNI, CAL POLY WAS A CAREER LAUNCHING PAD

BY MATT LAZIER

THE SIX PEOPLE CELEBRATED by the Cal Poly Alumni Association as this year's Honored Alumni have followed different paths to their individual accomplishments. But they share a common thread, tracing the roots of their success to their Cal Poly educations.

"Cal Poly was the launching pad for my career," said Michael G. Griffith, honoree for the College of Liberal Arts. "It gave me the confidence and the credibility to succeed in my work. I'm in the entertainment lighting business now, and I learned those basic skills in my time at Cal Poly."

The Cal Poly education taught these alumni how to envision ever higher frontiers for themselves. "The co-op programs that Cal Poly supported were invaluable," said College of Science and Mathematics honoree Eric E. Schadt. "My experiences with IBM and Chevron Research gave me the chance to apply theory that I had learned and experience different career paths. They were critical in my decision to continue on to grad school."

Working on senior projects helped some develop their teamwork skills. Said Patrick M. DeLong, the Orfalea College of Business honoree: "Something that was cemented in me during my senior project was the ability to work with and lead teams. Not a day goes by in my work when I don't use and

continue to develop this skill."

And the Learn by Doing model – the hallmark of the Cal Poly education – played an important role in shaping these future industry leaders when they were here. "It meant that when I started my first job after graduation, I knew what to do," said College of Engineering honoree Richard A. Bergquist said. "There was no need to train on the job, I was ready to go."

The Cal Poly Alumni Association also honored Marilyn Edling, a former vice president with Hewlett-Packard and a Cal Poly parent, with the Sandra Gardebring Ogren Leadership Award for her work with the Cal Poly Foundation Board, the university's main fundraising arm.

Alumnus Kenric B. Stone (B.S. **Architecture, 1979 and B.Arch., 1980**) received the Alumni Association's Distinguished Service Award. A two-time president and nearly 20-year veteran of the Cal Poly Alumni Association Board of Directors and a current member of the Cal Poly Foundation Board, Stone is compelled by his Cal Poly experience to continue to work with the university "A lot of us who volunteer, we're here because we feel a huge debt that we can't pay off. We need to make sure what we received is available to those who come after us." □

THE 2011 HONORED ALUMNI



Patrick M. DeLong (B.S., Business Administration, 1989), Orfalea College of Business, Chief Operating and Financial Officer, Crimson Wine Group, Ltd.



Richard A. Bergquist (B.S., Computer Science, 1977), College of Engineering, Board of Directors, Locus Technology



Michael G. Griffith (History, 1984), College of Liberal Arts, Director of Sales, Electronic Theater Controls, Inc.



Eric E. Schadt (B.S., Mathematics, 1991), College of Science and Mathematics, Chief Scientific Officer, Pacific Biosciences



John F. Salmonson (B.S., Crop Production, 1967), College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences, President, Monterey AgResources



David J. Gilmore (B.S., Architecture, 1976), College of Architecture and Environmental Design, Principal Architect, LPA, Inc.



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Bequest - Toward the end of each year, many people also review their long-range estate and financial plans.

CONTACT

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A COLLABORATION FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

A COLLECTIVE EFFORT TO SUPPORT LEARN BY DOING

BY MARY MCNALLY



“GROWING UP ON A FARM IN CALIFORNIA, I already had Learn by Doing experience,” said John Salmonson (**B.S., Crop Production, 1967**), owner of Monterey AgResources. “When I went to Cal Poly, it was like a finishing school preparing me for the workforce.”

Today, much of Cal Poly’s Learn by Doing philosophy is applied in cooperative, multidisciplinary projects that resemble real-world situations. Students work in teams to support the effort of the group, producing an effect greater than the sum of its parts.

In a creative twist, Salmonson and other donors are applying the same collaborative philosophy, coming together from a cross-section of industry to create an enduring fund that will support Learn by Doing in the College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences.

Ten Founding Partners have together committed \$1 million in total – half of the \$2 million goal for the Learn by Doing Endowment. The endowment will support students in laboratories and in the field; allow for small class sizes that enhance student-faculty interactions; and provide for student projects and competitions that help develop whole-system thinkers.

“Cal Poly gave me a good education,” said Rich Krizo (**B.S., Agricultural Business, 1970**) president of Pacific Appraisal Consultants, Inc., and Investor-level donor. Krizo said he learned how to assess goals and create a strategy to achieve them. Most of all, he said, the hands-on education gave him the confidence to know, “I can do it.”

At Cal Poly, Learn by Doing means more than just the classroom, said Salmonson, a Founding Partner with his wife, Carol. “You have labs and then you take what you learned into the field and see it happen.

“I’m convinced it works. We prefer to hire Cal Poly grads. They’re more mature and more prepared than other grads. They’re a year ahead of other new hires – at least.” □

THE BIGGER PICTURE

ENGINEERING ALUM STEVE BEEKS LEADS LIONSGATE ENTERTAINMENT INTO THE FUTURE

BY SCOTT T. BURNS

Steven Beeks



STEVEN BEEKS CAME TO CAL POLY to learn how to see the bigger picture.

Two decades later, Beeks (B.S., Industrial Engineering, 1978) is still using fundamentals of his Learn by Doing education overseeing some downright huge pictures as the president of the \$1.5 billion Lionsgate multimedia entertainment corporation.

Though an independent studio, Lionsgate is producing some of Hollywood's biggest recent fare – the successful “Saw” horror franchise; comedian Tyler

Perry's films and TV shows; and Oscar-winning films such as “Precious” and “Monster's Ball.” Just last year, the studio unleashed its most successful movie to date – the Sylvester Stallone action vehicle “The Expendables,” which raked in more than \$250 million.

Beeks points to his hands-on Cal Poly education as the basis for much of his professional success. “My job is to get things done,” he said. “I bring the practical point of view to Lionsgate. You can learn theory at thousands of schools, but Cal Poly gives you the real-world opportunity to practice the theory. That's what makes Cal Poly special. Cal Poly was where I learned how to do as well as think.”

And the difference between his undergraduate education in engineering and his current job in entertainment, he said, is just further proof of the broad value of his Cal Poly experience.

“The Industrial Engineering program showed me how

to bring everything together and think of things at a higher level,” Beeks said. “Dr. Don Morgan, who was head of the department when I was there, instilled in me a very important value: Education is not just about finding the answer. It's about understanding the process that gets you to the answer.

“It's about going beyond the obvious. Dr. Morgan told me to think beyond the particulars of engineering and to manage processes. I still practice that in the way I approach management today.”

Beeks began his career in manufacturing as a supervisor with fiberglass manufacturer Owens Corning. Within weeks of his starting, the manufacturers at the plant went on strike, and Beeks and other managers were left to pick up the slack. The experience allowed him to develop his ability to think on the fly and be productive – skills he said he first developed in his Cal Poly years.

After three years, he left to earn a master's in Business Administration from Harvard Business School. He then turned his attention to the entertainment industry, with firms such as Hallmark Home Video, The Paragon Group and Artisan Entertainment.

Lionsgate acquired Artisan in 2003, and Beeks was named Lionsgate's president in early 2004. His title was expanded in 2007 to include the role of co-chief operating officer.



His broad vision has helped him lead Lionsgate over the last seven years from a \$350 million independent movie studio once known primarily for horror films and an extensive home video library to North America's most successful independent film studio in terms of market share.

“Building a company like Lionsgate is like building any other successful company,” Beeks said, invoking his Learn by Doing experience. “It's about the process, not just the end result.” For Lionsgate, that has meant building a solid foundation on its home video library as a basis to create more high-risk, high-reward projects – big blockbusters such as “The Expendables” and high-dollar TV shows such as Emmy-winner “Mad Men” and Showtime staple “Weeds.”

Beeks sees his role as thinking ahead to keep Lionsgate poised for further success in the rapidly changing entertainment industry.

“You deal with trends. Things change overnight,” Beeks said. “Though we are the largest independent film and television distribution company, we operate in a land of giants. If you don't constantly improve, you will fail.”

CAL POLY WAS WHERE I LEARNED HOW TO DO AS WELL AS THINK.

That means expanding the company's digital online offerings and working to reach viewers through their tablets, smartphones and other handheld devices.

“Everyone is battling for the small screen in someone's hand,” Beeks said.

Lionsgate also must work through social media to connect with its customers, Beeks said. “We have to be in a position to listen,” he said. “We have to get closer to, and grow with, the consumer.”

And, of course, there are the blockbuster movies. A sequel to “The Expendables” is due in summer 2012. And with the retirement of the “Saw” movies after last year's 3D finale, Beeks and Lionsgate have their eyes set on the film adaptations of “The Hunger Games Trilogy,” a bestselling young-adult sci-fi/adventure book series, as the company's next major product. The first film, “The Hunger Games,” is set to debut in March.

As always, Beeks has his eyes on bigger pictures. □

SHORT SHOTS



Images from Lionsgate films and shows “The Hunger Games,” “The Expendables,” “Dirty Dancing,” “The Lincoln Lawyer,” “Mad Men” and “Saw.”

CAL POLY

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Dairy Science student **David Jones** (left) and Mechanical Engineering student **Sylvia Aguilar** were named king and queen at the 2011 Homecoming game Oct. 15.

The Mustangs defeated Southern Utah 31-27 with a thrilling late touchdown followed by a last-second interception to seal the Homecoming victory.

Other Homecoming events this year included a 2-1 soccer victory over rival UCSB, a tailgate barbecue, wine tasting and an event celebrating the 2011 Honored Alumni. (See story inside for more on the Honored Alumni.)

